A FUNERAL SERMON

AFTER THE

INTERMENT

OF

Mrs. *SARAH LYE*.

The late WIFE of

Mr. *Thomas Lye* of *Clapham*

By *PHIL. LAMB*, Minister of the WORD.

Together with the Scriptural Evidence and Experiences of the Grace of God towards, and in her, left under her own hand.

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PROV. VIII. 17.

I love them that love me; and thoſe that ſeek me early, ſhall find me.

OUR dear deceaſed Friend (whoſe death occaſioned this diverſion from our wonted courſe) as often as ſhe thought (as indeed ſhe did often think) of her great change approaching, and as ſhe was going to her Fathers Houſe (where doubtleſs ſhe is now in glory) deſired her dearſt friends, that theſe words might be the Text, or Theme of her Funeral Sermon, being (as we

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may very well conceive) willing to tell her ſurviving friends of that Love of God of which ſhe had taſted in her wilderneſs ſtate and of which ſhe hath now (undoubtedly) her full: we enjoy but few drops, but ſhe is got to the Fountain-head. She deſired that all hers, and all you, might know the way to the enjoyment of this Love, as well as her ſelf. The Text ſhe choſe is a worthy Text. Perhaps you may think 'tis not ſo ſuitable to a Funeral occaſion but let me tell you, Funeral Sermons are not *Subſidia mortuorum ſed ſolatia vivorum*, they are not they cannot be for the help of dead Saints, they need no ſuch little things: but they are for the comfort and ſolace of living Saints. The words are the words of

Wife

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In which, I ſhall only take notice of theſe two parts, or branches.

1. In the firſt part, there is a moſt glorious diſplay of Divine Grace and Love, in an act of wonderful condeſcenſion, enough to aſtoniſh Men and Angels: *I love them that love me.*

2. Here is a moſt gracious promiſe, the product of that glorious infinite Love; *And thoſe that ſeek me early ſhall find me.*

The firſt part of the Text is a fair Preface and Introduction to a moſt excellent Promiſe.

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'Tis true indeed, it begins with ſome kind of limitation and ſtraitneſs: *Thoſe that love me, Thoſe that ſeek me early.* But then it hath a moſt pleaſant and deſired *Exit*, with abundant ſatisfaction, *They ſhall find me.* There is your glory, your heaven, your eternal happineſs; here is the work of your lives. I beſeech you remember it, and let not this Text, or Sermon, be ever forgotten by you.

Here (I ſay) is the work of your lives, to ſeek early the happineſs of Eternity, to find God, and to enjoy him for ever.

Before I come to the Obſervations, give me leave to ſpeak a little to theſe two things.

1. To the Author of theſe words, that I may not leave one Soul here at an uncertainty. And

2. I

2. I would ſpeak a little to the Form of the words, that I may leave none of you under any miſtakes.

1. The Author of this great and glorious Text (if you look into the beginning of the Chapter) is Wiſdom uttering her voice. *Verſ.* 1, *Doth not wiſdom cry? and underſtanding put forth her voice?* verſ. 2, *She ſtandeth in the top of high places, by the way, in the places of the paths.* Verſ. 3, *She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors. Behold, I ſtand at the door and knock, Rev.* 3. 20. Wiſdom knocks, Wiſdom calls, Wiſdom cries, and uttereth her voice.

The Acceptations of *Wiſdom* in the Holy Scriptures, in the Word of God, are various.

'Tis ſometimes taken for the

God of Wiſdom himſelf. Sometimes for the Son of God, the wiſdom of the Father. Sometimes for the Spirit of Chriſt, who reveals wiſdom to the Saints of God, the Spirit of wiſdom and illumination. Sometimes for the grace of wiſdom, and ſpiritual knowledg. And ſometimes for the Word of Wiſdom, the Goſpel of Chriſt, as he ſays himſelf, *Matt.* 11. 19, *Wiſdom is juſtified of her Children.* That is, the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt, wherein the wonderful Wiſdom of God is diſplayed. Η πολυποικιλος σοφια τε Θεε, *Epheſ.* 3. 10.

But to wave the reſt (as having many things to ſpeak to you this day, that concern the happineſs of your precious and immortal ſouls to Eternity, and therefore I hope, that you will not only bear with me,

me, but alſo bear me up by your prayers.)

Doubtleſs by Wiſdom here in this Text, is meant the *Interna ſapientia*, ὁ λόγος, *Filius Dei*; and we are to underſtand the Internal, Eternal Wiſdom of God, that is called in Scripture, The Word of God, *the Word that was made Fleſh*, Wiſdom ſpeaking, the ſpeaking Wiſdom, the Son of God, the Son of God (*In quo, & a quo omnis ſapientia*) in whom and from whom is all wiſdom, all counſel and ſpiritual underſtanding, without whom we cannot know God the Father, or the Truth as we ſhould do; and by whom we know the Truth *as it is in Jeſus.*

In the firſt Verſe of this Chapter, Wiſdom is intituled to this great Speech, and indeed in the whole

whole Chapter (if you will but take the pains, when you are gone from hence, to read it ſeriouſly) before you come to the end thereof, you will be convinced, as well as I, that this Wiſdom is *the Son of God*, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, making this great Proclamation to all the World, *I love them that love me*; *and thoſe that ſeek me early ſhall find me.*

2. I told you, that I would ſhew you ſomewhat concerning the form or manner of this expreſſion, *I love them that love me:* to prevent the miſtakes, and errors, as we have need to do, eſpecially in this Age, wherein the minds and hearts of men, like Spiders ſuck poyſon from the moſt precious and moſt glorious Truths of the Goſpel.

I love

I love them that love me, doth not in the leaſt, 1. Intimate, that our love, or the love of the creature, is the cauſe of the love of God to our ſouls; nor doth it in the leaſt imply that our love is antecedaneous (the leaſt moment of time) to the love of God; which will the more clearly appear, if we curiouſly obſerve the manner of expreſſing it: 'Tis not ſaid, I will love them that will love me, but *I love them that love me.*

Beſides, the Apoſtle *John* clears the Text, and puts all out of doubt, in 1 *John* 4. 10, *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us.* And verſ. 19, *We love him, becauſe he firſt loved us.*

2. As it doth not at all any way intimate, or ſuggeſt the precedency of our love to God, before he loved

loved us; ſo in the next place, I muſt tell you, that it is a moſt excellent Truth, a golden Maxime, fit to be written on your Door-poſts; yea, on your very hearts, Wiſdoms thus ſaying to you, *I love them that love me.*

And it may ſerve eſpecially for theſe four great ends:

1. For the ſupport and comfort of poor doubting ſouls, that now lye very low, in a dark day, in a time of ſickneſs, under great afflictions; perhaps God hath come, and ſnatcht away a dear Wife out of an Husbands boſom, or hath taken away the Child of his delight; it may be many and long continued afflictions lye on him, and he looks upon theſe bitter and ſevere providences, and begins to queſtion now, whether God doth love him:

Time

Time was, when all things went well with me, and I had peace within, and comfort without, a Houſe full of enjoyments; but now 'tis a dark day, God hath ſmitten me with the ſtrokes of an enemy, the chaſtiſements of a cruel one are upon me, ſo that I doubt whether God loves me. Thus the poor doubting ſoul is apt to reaſon. But ſays God, look not at my providences, on thine own loſſes, croſſes, troubles, and on theſe outward diſpenſations; look rather into thy own heart, and if thou canſt read there but one line of love to my name, if thou canſt read there any true love to Jeſus Chriſt, then thou maiſt conclude with thy ſelf, that whatever Providences thou haſt met (or maiſt yet meet with) ſhall be for thy good.

good. *I love them that love me.* And theſe Providences are not the fruits of wrath, but rather the effects of pure love. *Rom.* 8. 28, *And we know* (ſays the Apoſtle) *that all things work together for good to them that love God.* I can chaſtiſe, correct, ſmite, but cannot hate my Sons and Daughters, ſays God. *Whom the Lord loveth, he chaſtneth, and ſcourgeth every Son whom he receiveth,* Heb. 12. 6. *I love them that love me.*

2. For the Relief of deſpairing ſouls, that are affected, deeply affected with their ſinning againſt God, and their utter unworthineſs, by reaſon thereof, of any ſmile from Heaven; but are ready to reaſon againſt their own ſouls, and to ſay, that ſurely God can never love ſuch a treacherous Apoſtate,

poſtate, and backſliding ſinner as I have been, and am; it's in vain for me to expect any love from Heaven, but rather in fury to be turned into Hell, and to be for ever rejected; my caſe and condition is worſe than that of *Cain*. But for the relief of ſuch, God reaſons thus, Didſt ever love me? Didſt ever love Jeſus Chriſt, and the Children of God? If ſo, take comfort to thy ſoul: for certainly, *I love them that love me*. Though it be ſo low, as it is, though thou canſt ſee nothing but wrath, and vengeance, and hell; yet, if thou haſt any love to me, to Jeſus Chriſt, and the Saints, thou maiſt be aſſured, that I love thee. *I love them that love me.*

3. For the help, wonderful help, and encouragement of poor ſinners

to

to duty: How is this glorious proclamation of Love and Grace accommodated for the help of poor ſouls, through their whole lives? Have you any true love for God? You ſay, you have no ſtrength, no might, ſo that you are not able to do any thing to pleaſe God: Why, what is the matter? You cannot ſee, that you have any ſhare of the Love of God. Look into the tranſcript, look into the Copy in your hearts, and if you can ſee any true love to God there, go and pray, and hear, and ſuffer what's alotted for you, and you ſhall find all ſweet and eaſie to you.

4. And Laſtly, and that undoubtedly, this great truth from the mouth of Wiſdom, *I love them that love me*, is intended for a general proclamation of ſovereign grace

grace and mercy to all the Sons and Daughters of men, and a ſweet invitation to all perſons, to perform the duty contain'd in the next words, namely, *to ſeek early after God:* Here is wonderful freeneſs and fulneſs of Divine Grace, large enough for all men; and 'tis enough to encourage thoſe perſons (that are naturally haters of God in their minds) to return, and enquire after him, becauſe God is ready to meet them, and requite them with reciprocal love: Do your duty, and if you love me, and ſeek me, be ſure I have a love for you.

But I will detain you no longer among the terms and words of the Text, though to keep my uſual wont and method, I muſt always endeavour to make the way plain before you.

The Text I told you had two branches, and 'tis my purpoſe (if the Lord enable me) to gather ſome fruit from each of them.

From the firſt part, *I love them that love me.* I would offer this to you,

Doct. 1. *That there is a mutual and reciprocal love between Chriſt and his Saints.*

I told you, that it was a Proclamation of the love of Chriſt, and where he loves, he begets love; ſo that whenſoever a Saint truly loves Chriſt, he may be ſure, that Chriſt doth intirely love him: *I am my beloveds, and my beloved is mine.* The believing ſoul ſays ſo; And who can but live and dye on ſuch a word as this is? eſpecially when Chriſt ſays, as in the Text,

I love

I love them that love me. I love this Saint, and he loves me.

That is the firſt Obſervation.

The ſecond is much like it, and that is,

Doct. 2. *That they that ſeek the Lord early, ſhall certainly find him, ſhall certainly enjoy, eternally enjoy him, ſhall find him a God of Grace and Mercy, and ſhall enjoy him for ever.*

But firſt, of the firſt of theſe: *That there is a mutual and a reciprocal love between Chriſt and his Saints.*

To diſpatch this, (and yet not to make more haſte than good ſpeed) that you may underſtand it, I ſhall endeavour to ſhew you here,

1. That Chriſt loves his Saints.

2. How he diſcovers, and

manifeſts his love to them.

3. That the Saints of God do love the Lord Jeſus.

4. How they do expreſs and manifeſt their love to him: That by all this put together, you may eaſily conclude, that there is a mutual, and reciprocal love betweer Chriſt and the Saints.

1. Firſt of all, That Jeſus Chriſ hath a peculiar, a ſpecial, dea love to his Saints; Jer. 31. 3, *have loved thee with an everlaſtin love.* Epheſ. 5. 25, 26, 27, *Wh loved his Church, and gave himſel for it* (that is evidence enough *that he might ſanctifie, and clean it, with the waſhing of water, b the word. That he might preſe it to himſelf a glorious Church, n having ſpot, or wrinkle, or any ſu thing; but that it ſhould be ho*

and without blemiſh: And this Text I mention the rather, becauſe it is one of the laſt Scriptures that our *Deceaſed Friend* inſiſted on, when ſhe took her laſt farwel of me; *Who loved his Church* (ſaid ſhe) *and gave himſelf for it*, &c.

2. For the manner, how the Lord Jeſus Chriſt doth expreſs and diſcover his love to his Saints. Though I might inſtance in many methods and ways of his diſcovering his love to them; yet I ſhall confine my ſelf to theſe *three* particulars, by which he eminently makes known the intireneſs of his indeared love to his Saints; and by the ſame ways I ſhall ſhew you by and by, that the Saints of God do expreſs their love to Jeſus Chriſt.

1. Firſt of all, he diſcovers and

makes known his love to his Saints, in denying himself of all the glory he had with his Father, in leaving those Regions above, that he might come down, and gather his Saints together, that he might redeem them out of the hands of Hell, and deliver them out of the House of their Prison and bondage. *Rev.* 1. 6, *Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood*; he gave his heart blood for us. *Phil.* 2. 5, 6, 7, *Who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God*, Gods fellow, coequal with the Father: What did he do? why, *He made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a Servant, and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient*

ent unto death, even the death of the croſs. Was not here love? Greater love hath no man than this, That a man lay down his life for his friend; yet this was greater love, for *Chriſt laid down his life for his enemies*, Rom. 5. 10.

2. He manifeſts his intire love to his Saints, in the delight he hath in their communion, and in fellowſhip with them: Chriſt is never better pleaſed, or more delighted, than when his Saints are in communion and fellowſhip with him. When, and *Where-ever two or three are gathered together in my name*, there is my heaven, here I delight to dwell: If you read over this 8*th* Chapter of *Proverbs*, at the 31 *verſe*, you ſhall ſee the redundancy of Chriſts love to his people, before ever he had a peo-

ple; they were his contemplative
delight, that he ſhould come down
and be with them, and give him-
ſelf for them. *Rejoycing in the*
habitable part of his earth, and my
delights were with the ſons of men.
Do but read *Cant.* 7. 5, and there
you ſhall ſee how the Spouſe her
ſelf takes notice of the delight her
Beloved takes in communion with
her; *The King* (ſays ſhe) *is held*
(or bound, as in the Margin) *in*
the Galleries. What are the Galle-
ries? why, they are the Ordinances,
wherein he promiſes to meet his
Saints: the King will ſit at his round
Table, he will walk with them in
the Galleries, in private commu-
nion; he is held or bound there:
That is, he takes ſo much plea-
ſure and delight, he is taken ſo
much with the beauty he hath put
upon

upon his Saints, that (to ſpeak it with reverence) he cannot tell how to go from them, and leave them; as a man with his beſt beloved is bound (as it were) with chains of love.

3. And laſtly, Chriſt manifeſts his love to his Saints, in the earneſt longing he hath to have them with him in his glory. When any one ſinner is converted, it is ſaid *there is joy in heaven*, the King of Saints rejoyceth, all the Angels and Saints ſing together; there is (I ſay) joy in Heaven when one ſinner comes in; Chriſts ſends forth his Angels to entertain them, and to bring them into his Fathers preſence; nay, he leads them in, himſelf. In *Joh.* 14. 2, 3, Chriſt tells his Diſciples, *In my Fathers houſe are many manſions; if it were not ſo, I would*

I would have told you ; I go to pre-
pare a place for you. And if I g
and prepare a place for you, I wil
come again, and receive you unt
my ſelf, that where I am, there y
may be alſo. And you may read
at your leiſure that raviſhing
Chapter *Joh.* 17, and if you read
it with underſtanding, and your
ſouls go with your eyes (be it
ſpoken with reverence to ſuch a
glorious God and King as he is)
you will perceive, that he ſeems
not ſatisfied with his own glory at
the right hand of the Majeſty on
high, without the Company of his
dear-bought Saints, that he hath
bought with his own blood; Read
eſpecially the 22, 23, 24 *verſes* ;
And the glory that thou gaveſt me, I
have given them ; that they may be
one, even as we are one. Verſ. 23,

I in

I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know, that thou haſt ſent me, and haſt loved them, as thou haſt loved me. Verſ. 24, *Father, I will, that they alſo whom thou haſt given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou haſt given me: for thou lovedſt me before the foundation of the world.* Then Chriſts Mediatory Kingdom will be compleated, and the ſhame and ſufferings that were undergon by him, will be anſwered, when he hath gathered his Saints to himſelf, to behold his glory.

3. And now I ſhall ſhew you the ſecond part; if we turn the Table, then we ſhall ſee, that the Saints of God, in their meaſure, and according to their ſtrength, thoſe that

are

are truly ſuch, do love the Lor
Jeſus with all their hearts; and
you find it not thus with you, yo
have reaſon to be jealous of, an
to ſuſpect your ſelves; I ſay th
true Saints of God do love the
Lord Jeſus with all their hearts
Whom having not ſeen, ye love: i
whom, though now you ſee him not
yet believing, ye rejoyce with joy un
ſpeakable and full of glory, 1 Pet. 1.
8. *Whom having not ſeen ye love*,
with ſuch a love as raiſes you
hearts; it is, *Amor vulnerans li-*
gans, &c. a love (as one ſays)
that wounds, that ſtrikes them to
the very heart; a love that binds
their ſouls to Chriſt; which made
the Spouſe cry out, *Cant.* 2. 5, *Sta*
me with flagons, comfort me with
apples, for I *am ſick of love.* The
truth is, you may imagine that it
is

is an Hyperbolical expreſſion; but indeed there is no expreſſion that can fully ſet it out; and therefore you ſee, how the Spouſe hangs, as it were, on the lips of Chriſt, *Cant.* 1. 2, *Let him kiſs me with the kiſſes of his mouth: for thy love*, or loves, *is better than wine.* And every Saint, while he is *in the wilderneſs*, in his Wilderneſs-ſtate, *leans on his beloved:* What would a Saint have in any condition? None but Chriſt, Chriſt is his All in all.

4. And therefore in the ſecond place I ſhall ſhew you, That the Saints of God do mutually and reciprocally expreſs and diſcover their love to Jeſus Chriſt, in their meaſure, in their degree, as he makes known his love to them. As,

1. They expreſs their love to Chriſt,

Chriſt, in denying all for him. Chriſt left a Kingdom, and all the glory of his Fathers Houſe: But alas! the Saints of God they have nothing to leave in compariſon of what he left. They that leave Houſes, Lands, Mannors, Kingdoms for Chriſt, all this is little (I ſay) in compariſon of what Chriſt left for them; but the truth is, whatever the Saints have, all that they have, they will lay at the feet of Chriſt when he calls them to it, and this, as ſoon as ever they apprehend that love of Chriſt to them; as ſoon as ever they come to be made ſenſible of the worthineſs of Chriſt, of the All-ſufficiency that is in Chriſt to do them good, away goes the world, they ſit looſe to it, as looſe as *Elijah*'s Mantle, 2 *Kings* 2.13, which fell

fell off when he was taken up to Heaven: Thus ſaid, and thus did the Diſciples of Chriſt, *We have left all and followed thee.* But I ſhall only add the example of one eminent Saint, who left all for Chriſt; and if all the Princes in the World had thrown their Crowns into his lap, he would have left them all. Phil. 3. 7, 8, *What things were gain to me, thoſe were counted loſs for Chriſt. Yea doubtleſs, and I count all things but loſs for the excellency of the knowledg of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord: for whom I have ſuffered the loſs of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Chriſt.* v. 9, *And be found in him, &c.*

2. As Chriſt diſcovers his love to the Saints, in his delight of communion with them, ſo the people of God do intirely love, earneſtly de-

deſire, and delight in communio
with the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; the
would be in fellowſhip with Chri
where-ever they be, *Cant.* 1. 1
A bundle of myrrh is my well-belov
unto me, he ſhall lye all night b
twixt my breaſts, that is, near m
heart. And therefore is the Spouſ
brought in, *Cant.* 2.7, breaking ou
after this ſtrange kind of manner
I charge you, or I adjure you, *O y*
Daughters of Jeruſalem, by the Roes
and by the Hindes of the field, tha
ye ſtir not up, nor awake my love, til
he pleaſe. The Lord Chriſt (as i
ſhe had ſaid) is come to abide with
me, and I take ſo much delight in
communion and fellowiſhip with
him, that I charge you not to di-
ſturb him: I would not have the
deareſt luſt, I would not have any
ſin whatſoever to interpoſe betwixt
Chriſt and me.

3. As

3. As Christ discovers the greatness of his love to his Saints, in longing to injoy them with himself in his glory; so the Saints of God, here upon earth, do long (earnestly long) to injoy him in his Fathers presence, in the House of his glory, to be in those Mansions that he hath provided for them, in those Regions of glory above: *They look earnestly for the glorious appearance of the great God, and the Lord Jesus Christ*, as the Apostle to *Titus* expresses it, *Titus* 2. 13, 14, *Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purifie unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* They look out, as *Sisera*'s Mother,

out of her Window, and cry through the Lattice, *Judg.* 5. 28, *Why is his Chariot ſo long in coming? why tarry the wheels of his Chariots?* So the ſoul of a Saint looks out at every cranny, at the eye, and at the ear, and cries out, Why tarries his Chariot? why is he ſo long in coming? That *dear Saint* that is gone before us, was wont to tell me, That ſhe had waited a long time for her great change, and did continue waiting: And the truth is, it cannot be otherwiſe, when once a Soul is eſpouſed to Jeſus Chriſt, and hath been kiſſed with the kiſſes of his mouth, and knows any thing of his love, and lovelineſs; from the very day of eſpouſals, there will be, there muſt be a longing deſire of enjoyment; as it is with young Lovers, when once

true

true love is between them, all the time after is a time of deſire and longing: Make haſte (ſays the ſoul to Chriſt) and come away; *Egredere anima*, ſays the longing Saint; go out, Soul, to meet Jeſus Chriſt: this is the Caſe, as it is between Chriſt and a believing Soul: Says the Soul to Chriſt, either come down to me, or take me up to thee; Dear Jeſus Chriſt, when ſhall I come, and appear before God? *I deſire to be diſſolved, and to be with Chriſt*, which is beſt of all. I would alſo obſerve to you, that paſſionate out-cry of the Spouſe to Jeſus Chriſt, *Cant.* 8. 14, *Make haſte, my beloved, and be thou like to a young Roe, or to a young Hart upon the mountains of ſpices.* It is the voice of a believer to Jeſus Chriſt.

I ſhould now make a tranſition from hence to the next Obſervation; but let me firſt a little improve this.

And the uſe I ſhall make of the firſt Doctrine is this,

Uſe. 1. To ſtand a while, together with you, admiring at the infinite, ſovereign, and free Grace of God, who hath ſet his love upon man, and hath done poor creatures that honour, as to engage their hearts to love God, and the truths of God. God is not beholding to us for our love; for he is an object infinitely above our love, and 'tis a wonder of mercy, that God accounts us worthy to love him, and to love Jeſus Chriſt: What a mercy is this, that God ſhould beget in us any love to himſelf,

ſelf, by revealing his infinite love to us! that *his love ſhould be ſhed abroad in our hearts!* Oh! ſtand amazed at this! eſpecially when you hear God ſaying, *Iſa.* 65. 1, *I am ſought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that ſought me not: I ſaid, behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name.* But more of this anon, when I come to the ſecond Branch. Only here we may go away with admiring thoughts into Heaven, at this infinite, free, and condeſcending love of God to our poor ſouls: and to raiſe up our hearts to the greater admiration, conſider,

1. What a great, what a wonderful and immenſe Love this Love of God is, that he bears to poor creatures, *his favour is better than*

life it ſelf. Pſal. 63. 3, *Becauſe* (ſays the *Pſalmiſt*) *thy loving kindneſs is better than life, my lips ſhall praiſe thee.* What ſhall we call it? A Fountain, a Fountain without brim or bottom: *Amor Dei eſt infundens & creans bonitatem.* The Love of Chriſt (as one ſays) 'tis that which creates and infuſeth goodneſs, all manner of good, temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal.

2. Would you ſee the fruits and effects of this Love? Alas! 'tis not a ſmall matter for the great, and glorious, and holy God, to tell a poor ſoul, I love thee. Men may ſay ſo, and it may ſignifie little: but God never ſays ſo to any, but it creates a Heaven in the Soul, it fills the Soul with all the joys and delights of Heaven, it leads him into the Regions of Life and Peace,

peace,

peace, peace, and aſſurance for ever, *Iſa.* 26. 3. and 32. 17. In all your duties, this will be your delight, That God loves you: In a time of darkneſs, this will be your light; and in the pangs of death, this will be your living comfort, That God loves you, and that you have had an heart truly to love God; and you know that he loves you by your love to him, and your love to God being (as it were) the tranſcript of Gods Love to you in your ſouls. And indeed, (which may raiſe your admirings) where God loves, and whom he loves, he never leav e, he never ceaſes to love. *Rom* 8. 38, 39, *For I am perſwaded* (ſaith the Apoſtle there) *that neither death, nor life, nor Angels*, good or bad Angels, *nor principalities, nor pow-*

ers, nor things preſent, nor things to come: Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature ſhall be able to ſeperate us from the love of God, which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.

2. Uſe of exhortation to them that truly love the Lord Jeſus:

Dear Saints, you that have indeed a true love to God, and do by that ſee his love to your ſouls; Oh, keep your ſelves in the love of God. To that end,

Direct. 1. Set a high price on this grace that is wrought in you, and (as the Apoſtle ſays) let it be your great care to preſerve, and to keep life in this love of yours to Jeſus Chriſt. *Jude verſ.* 21, *Keep your ſelves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt unto eternal life.* And for this purpoſe.

1. Firſt

1. Firſt of all conſider the worth of this love to Chriſt, what an excellent and wonderful grace this is, to have a heart truly to love the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

1. It is that, which is the cleareſt evidence of the Love of God, it gives you all your life and comfort in a time of darkneſs, in a dark day, to know by your love to Jeſus Chriſt, that he loves you, and that the Father loves you; there is no ſuch clear evidence as this in all the World: If a man had all the treaſures of gold and ſilver in the world, he could not read the love of God in them; but in your true love to Jeſus Chriſt you may. When you walk in darkneſs, and can ſee no light, this is that ſpark of light that will give you light when you are at a loſs. When it

is

is dark round about us, when we can ſee little or no faith, little or no hope, little or no ſtrength that we have; let us then inquire, and ſee whether we have any love, and if we have any true love to Chriſt, this will give us light and life. Rom. 8. 28, *We know that all things* (ſays the Apoſtle) *work together for good*, To whom? *to them that love God.* If one ſhould ask me this queſtion, Why is the promiſe made to thoſe that love God? I anſwer, becauſe the Saints do want ſomewhat to comfort, to ſupport, and relieve them in a dark day; and when all other light fails, and we can ſee no faith, find no holineſs, this will never fail them: If there be once true love to Chriſt, there will be ſome ſpark remaining, that will adminiſter comfort to them in the darkeſt day. 2. Con-

2. Conſider with your ſelves, that if you preſerve and keep up this love, this love to Jeſus Chriſt in your hearts, it will work in you a likeneſs to Chriſt; And can you deſire to be like any perſon that you love better? or that is more exactly and perfectly pure and holy, that is, more lovely than Chriſt? This true love is a fire that makes all things like it ſelf; true love to God is of an aſſimilating vertue, it will make us like to God, and like to Chriſt, whom we love: Love is like a Looking-glaſs, if you turn the Glaſs downward, there will appear nothing but the repreſentation of earth, and terreſtrial creatures, all earth; but if you turn it upward, then there will appear Heaven, and celeſtial, and the unſeen glory of another world, unſeen

ſeen as to our bodily eyes, but viſible to the eye of faith: If we give forth our love to Chriſt, why then all Chriſt, all Heaven, and all holineſs is on the ſoul.

Direction 2. Be diligent and exact on your watch: if you do prize, and ſet any value upon this love to Jeſus Chriſt, endeavour to keep it, as you would keep your lives; keep it as you would keep the beſt Jewel in the world; nay, the world cannot give, cannot afford you ſuch another Jewel: This Chriſt hath bought for you with his own moſt precious blood, by his death, his ſhameful and accurſed death; and therefore you have reaſon, great reaſon to keep it ſafe, for its own worth, and becauſe it is of ſo great uſe, as hath been before mentioned, becauſe it will be a light to

you

you in a dark, in the darkeſt day, and becauſe it will make you like God, and like Chriſt; take heed therefore, leſt it be ſtoln from you, or abated in you. As perſons that have a Jewel of great price and value, will be often looking into the place where they laid it up, to ſee whether it be ſafe; ſo this ſpark of Divine fire, which is put into, and laid up in our Souls, is a Jewel of matchleſs and ineſtimable price; How therefore ſhould we inquire concerning it, how it is with us, as to our love to God and Chriſt? We ſhould be trying and examining our ſelves, whether Wives, or Children, or any earthly Relations, or worldly concernments or enjoyments, have not ſtoln away our hearts, or abated our love: We ſhould ſay to our own

hearts

hearts in this caſe, as Chriſt to *Peter* on another account, *Loveſt thou me more than thoſe? Joh.* 21. 15, 16, 17. So we ſhould ſay to our hearts, Doſt thou love Jeſus Chriſt? doſt thou love him indeed and in earneſt? doſt thou love him better than theſe, than theſe Children, theſe pretty little Idols that are ſet up before our eyes? doſt love him better than all creature-comforts and relations? doſt love him better than all earthly treaſures, better than thy eſtate, better than all the world, better than all theſe? Yea, better than Heaven it ſelf without Chriſt? Thus I ſay, we ſhould ſtill be examining our hearts, and ſee how it is with us, as to our love to Chriſt: for to tell you the truth, our hearts are very treacherous: I know not how it is

with

with yours, but I find it ſo with mine, and that it is a very hard matter to keep up that height of love to Jeſus Chriſt as there ſhould be. The Prophet *Jeremiah* tells us, *Jer.* 17. 9, That *the heart is deceitful above all things, and deſperately wicked, who can know it?* And as it is ſo in general, ſo eſpecially with God, the heart is more inclined to be treacherous with God, and in things relating to God, than in any other things; and therefore we have great need to look well to them, to be diligent, and exact upon our watch, in reference to this love to Chriſt.

Direct. 3. If God hath vouchſafed this grace to you, as he hath made you partakers of his love, and given you the tranſcript or reflection thereof, be you ſure that you

you love him again, and be you ſure alſo to keep off every thing that may ſtifle or quench the heat of your love; take heed of thoſe ſtrong blaſts, thoſe wicked and curſed temptations that ariſe from Hell; take heed alſo of thoſe damps that ariſe from the world; if you ſet your affections there, thoſe cold vapours ariſing thence, will either abate or extinguiſh the heat of this pure heavenly fire of love; take heed of being Servants, with the World, to the luſts of the fleſh; beware of theſe things: Sin, the luſts of the fleſh, the love of the World, and Chriſt, are, ἀσύστατα, inconſiſtent, they cannot dwell together in one Soul. 1 *Joh.* 2.15, *If any man love the world, the love of the father is not in him.* Theſe are like two fires in one Chimney,

the

the one will extinguiſh the other.

Direct. 4. Fourthly and Laſtly, Be ſure to add fuel to this fire, and keep this heat you have received from Heaven warm, take heed that your hearts never get cold; I muſt confeſs, that we live in a cold and frozen age, in the worlds old age, in an age wherein there is little love to God, to Jeſus Chriſt, and to the Saints; and if you would in this cold ſeaſon keep up the height of your love to Chriſt, I would adviſe you,

1. To be much in communion with him; the nearer you are to the Sun, the more heat you will have.

2. Be diligent, and active, and vigorous in the performance of every duty, clothe your ſelves well with the conſtant performance of

duty; tender bodies, delicate perſons, if they leave off a Garment, are very apt to catch cold, and ſo it will be with us if we neglect the conſtant performance of duty; the neglect of praying morning and evening, the neglect of praying conſtantly in your Cloſets, the neglect of hearing Sermons, the neglect of the due obſervation of the Sabbath, in the neglect of theſe things you will be apt to get cold; yet it is not enough barely to attend theſe duties (which is too common a folly and ſin) but there is one thing more to be done, and that is, when you have been in the exerciſe of your love, and in communion with Chriſt, when you have warmed your ſelves in your Cloſets, or at an Ordinance, go not too ſoon into the world; this

care

care we do uſually take for our bodies, when we are warm, when we are hot, we do not preſently expoſe our ſelves to the cold; and thus we ſhould do in reference to our ſouls, when we have been at an Ordinance, and have been warmed and heated there, we ſhould not too ſoon adventure abroad into the world; this hath done a world of miſchief, and perſons have thereby cool'd and dampt their love.

3. And one thing more: When you meet together, not to be quench-coals one to another, not to abate the love and zeal one of another, but (as the Apoſtle exhorts, *Heb.* 10. 24,) *Conſider one another*; What to do? *to provoke unto love and to good works*, love to God, love to Chriſt, love one to

another, love to the Ordinances of God: When you meet together, do not meet together (I ſay) to cool one another, but meet as ſo many live-coals, that will kindle and enliven one another, that you may make the greater heat, that you may warm your ſelves, and one another, and ſo keep your hearts and affections continually warm for God.

Uſe. 2. I have yet a word to another ſort of people by way of Application, and that is, to ſuch as have never yet taſted of the love of God, nor never yet have found any love to Chriſt in their ſouls; I hope there are, or may be none, or few ſuch here, and therefore I ſhall ſpeak but little to this; if there ſhould be any ſuch here, or

any

any of yours at home ſhould be ſuch, their caſe is as bad as that of *Cain* or *Judas*. If they have yet no love to God, and to Chriſt, I tell them that are here, and do you that are here tell them that are at home, that they muſt never content themſelves without it any longer, without which they can never be able to ſay, truly to ſay, that God loves them: for if they hate Chriſt, Chriſt will hate them, and ſet himſelf againſt them; yea, there is a curſe gone out, and pronounced againſt them already, 1 *Cor.* 16. 22, *If any man* (ſays the Apoſtle) *love not the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, let him be Anathema Maranatha.* And therefore you that are ſuch as I am now ſpeaking to, be you perſwaded from henceforth to love Chriſt, and in order thereto, wait

upon the means of grace, where God hath promiſed to ſhew forth his love, and to inkindle it, and inflame their hearts with a greater and higher love to himſelf. In *Job* 22. 21, ſays *Eliphas* to *Job*, *Acquaint thy ſelf with him*, that is, with God, *and be at peace: thereby good ſhall come unto thee.* And this brings me now at laſt (though I have ſtaid long from it) to the ſecond Obſervation from the Text, wherein lies much comfort for poor ſouls, though you have had hitherto but a little light and love from God, and but little love to God; And that is,

Doct. 2. *That they that ſeek the Lord early, ſhall certainly find him, and ſhall find him a God full of grace and mercy, and ſhall certainly en-*

enjoy him eternally in Heaven.

Our *deceaſed Friend* (that precious Saint of God that is gone before us) having found the benefit of an early ſeeking after God and Chriſt in the way of his Ordinances, deſired that her neareſt Friends, Relations, and Children, might be (and indeed by chuſing this Text doth adviſe us all to be) *a Generation of Seekers*; and oh that God would make every one of us ſuch, as may *ſeek thy face, O Jacob*, O God of *Jacob*; that is, that may ſeek after Jeſus Chriſt: This is the work of our lives, and it is well for us that Jeſus Chriſt came into the world to ſeek and to ſave that which was loſt, and to put this great advantage into our hands, that we could never have had

without him. In *Matt.* 7. 7, 8, Chriſt exhorts us, *Ask, and it ſhall be given you: ſeek, and ye ſhall find: knock, and it ſhall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh, receiveth: and he that ſeeketh, findeth: and to him that knocketh, it ſhall be opened.*

Under the Covenant of works you might ſeek, and ſeek, till your eyes ſunk into the holes of your heads, and never have found Chriſt nor God; but now he tells us, that he is come into the world, and that if we ſeek him with our whole hearts, in the way of his Ordinances and appointments, we ſhall find him; and that if we knock there, it ſhall be opened unto us.

In the proſecution of this Obſervation, I ſhall only ſpeak to theſe three things.

1. Firſt

1. Firſt of all I ſhall ſhew you, That man is born in a natural eſtrangement from God, every man, every individual perſon, every Mothers Child is brought into the world, naturally eſtranged from God. In *Pſal.* 58. 3, *The wicked are eſtranged from the womb, they go aſtray as ſoon as they be born, ſpeaking lies.* There is the very Character and Picture of a man in a natural ſtate, he is born with his back upon God, and going with his face towards Hell; before he can walk with men, he can run away from God.

2. I ſhall ſhew you, That they that would eſcape that ſin and miſery that attend this eſtate of eſtrangement from God, muſt ſeek him early; for they are in the Regions of darkneſs, and in a ſtate of ſin and

and miſery (as the Apoſtle expreſſes it, *Epheſ.* 2. 12,) *Being without Chriſt, aliens from the commonwealth of Iſrael, ſtrangers from the covenant of promiſe, having no hope, and without God in the world.* And the Apoſtle ſpeaking of ſuch, ſo living, and ſo dying, in 2 *Theſ.* 1. 9, ſays, *Who ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.* And there is no way to eſcape this, but by ſeeking early after God, by ſeeking early after Jeſus Chriſt. And this is that which I ſhall now ſpeak to, and which the Prophet *Iſa.* 55. 6, 7, offers to us in the like terms. *Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near. Now is the accepted time, now is the day of ſalvation,* 2 *Cor.* 6. 2,

You

You cannot tell how ſoon it may be, that you may ſeek, and God will not be found; that you may call, and he will not anſwer; that you may knock, and yet it ſhall not be opened to you: for I tell you, (yea, Chriſt himſelf tells you) *Luke* 13. 24, *That many ſhall ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able:* and it muſt be, and is ſpoken of ſuch kind of perſons as we be, of perſons that make a high profeſſion, that injoy the Ordinances of God; *Mat.* 7. 22, 23. *Many* (ſays Chriſt) *will ſay to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not propheſied in thy name? and in thy name have caſt out Devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profeſs unto them, I never knew you: depart from me ye that work iniquity.* Now is the time of your ſeeking.

And

And becauſe there is the greateſt Emphaſis intended in this term *early*, early ſeeking after God, I ſhall wave all the reſt, and apply my ſelf to a timous, to an early ſeeking after God, if God ſhall give us the wiſdom of the Swallow, the Turtle, the Stork and the Crane, *Jer.* 8. 7, to let us know our ſeaſon, and the things that belong to our peace.

And in reference to this, I ſhould have thought it moſt proper for me to have ſpoken more largely to five or ſix particulars; but the time will not give me leave, and therefore I ſhall but only name them.

1. I ſhould have ſhewed you, what it is to ſeek, what is meant by the act of ſeeking.

2. What it is to ſeek God, conſidering the act with the object, what

what it is to ſeek Chriſt: And that under theſe Four Heads.

1. To ſeek the Lord, is to ſeek an acquaintance with God, to ſeek after the knowledg of Chriſt: this we ſhould do early; and becauſe we cannot do it more early, we ſhould do it now; and it is our great concern to get an acquaintance with God; we ſhould ſeek now to know God and Chriſt; this is of ſo great weight, that Chriſt himſelf tells us, *Joh.* 17. 3, *This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent.*

2. To ſeek God, is to ſeek reconciliation with God: for there is enmity and hoſtility between God and us poor ſinful wretches; every one of us, as we are ſinners by nature and by practice, ought to ſeek re-

reconciliation with God, and an intereſt in Chriſt, aud to make him our Friend; and for this we are Ambaſſadors; the whole Goſpel ſerves for this end; it is the Miniſtry of reconciliation. 2 *Cor.* 5. 18, 19, 20, *All things are of God,* (ſays the Apoſtle) *who hath reconciled us to himſelf by Jeſus Chriſt, and hath given to us the miniſtry of reconciliation*; *To wit, that God was in Chriſt, reconciling the world unto himſelf, not imputing their treſpaſſes unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are Ambaſſadors for Chriſt, as though God did beſeech you by us*; *we pray you in Chriſts ſtead, be ye reconciled to God.*

3. To ſeek the Lord, is to ſeek communion with God, and to ſeek communion with Jeſus Chriſt, to ſeek

ſeek him in his Ordinances, in his publick Ordinances, Inſtitutions, and Appointments; to ſeek him in our private duties, in our cloſets, to have cloſe communion with God, and with Chriſt there: *If any man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him* (ſays Chriſt), *Joh.* 14. 23. So that it is a duty that lies on us to ſeek God more in ſecret duties, and more in publick Ordinances night and day, wherever we be, to have further rnd more intimate acquaintance with him, and to have a more clear intereſt in Chriſt, and more intimate communion with him: *By night on my bed*, ſays the Spouſe, *Cant.* 3. 1, 2, 3, 4, *I ſought him whom my ſoul loveth, I ſought him*

him (on her bed, but that perhaps may be drowſily, it was a kind of drowſie ſeeking) *and I found him not.* What then? *I will riſe now and go about the City in the ſtreets, and in the broad ways I will ſeek him whom my ſoul loveth: I ſought him, but I found him not: The watch-men that go about the City, found me: to whom I ſaid, Saw ye him whom my ſoul loveth? It was but a litttle that I paſſed from them, but I found him whom my ſoul loveth: I held him, and would not let him go,* &c. Thus ſhould we ſeek Jeſus Chriſt, thus ſhould we ſeek communion and fellowſhip with him. And in *Cant.* 1.7. She thus beſpeaks the Lord Jeſus, *Tell me, O thou whom my ſoul loveth, where thou feedeſt, where thou makeſt thy flock to reſt at noon: for why ſhould*

ſhould I be as one that turneth aſide by the flocks of thy companions? And this Scripture I mention the rather, becauſe I now it was much the ſpirit of our *deceaſed Friend*, that precious Saint now with God; who did ſeek Jeſus Chriſt in pure Ordinances, and deſired to wait for him in the moſt uncorrupt, and pureſt ways of Communion; for which ſhe had a great zeal, to my certain knowledg.

4. And Laſtly, To ſeek the Lord, is to ſeek the eternal injoyment of God, and ſo to ſeek the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as that we may injoy him in his glory, ſetting our faces heavenward, as in *Jer.* 50. 4, 5, It is ſaid of the Children of *Iſrael*, and the Children of *Judah*, that they ſhall come together, going, and weeping; that they ſhall

go and ſeek the Lord their God. And that *they ſhall ask the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward, &c.* They did not only look, but they went; they did not look one way and go another, but they looked, and went where they might find God; for they ſaid, *come, and let us joyn our ſelves to the Lord, in a perpetual covenant that ſhall not be forgotten.* I ſhould have alſo ſhewn you

3. Where you ſhould ſeek the Lord Jeſus.

4. How you ſhould ſeek him. And then

5. Why you ſhould ſeek him.

But the time conſtrains me to retire to that one ſingle term (early) to that circumſtance of time, becauſe in it lies the greateſt Emphaſis (as I ſaid before) and may be of great

great uſe to us at this day: and here I ſhall ſhew you, what is intended by early ſeeking of God. I am ſure, thoſe that have lived longeſt, are moſt concerned herein; the youngeſt, yea, every one of us ſhould account it our greateſt concern, early to ſeek the Lord. But what is it that is intended by this expreſſion, early to ſeek the Lord? This I ſhall ſhew you in Three particulars.

1. It ſeems to have reference unto a day of Gods ſevere diſpenſations, when he goes forth to correct the Nations, to afflict Families, and perſons; there is ſuch a day, and that is the day of the Lord; and in this day, as it is our duty ſo it ſhould be our wiſdom to ſeek the Lord early, before he kills and deſtroys us, before he makes an ut-

ter end by the ſeverity of his ſtroke. In *Zeph.* 2.1,2,3, ſays the Prophet, *Gather together, O nation not deſired. Before the decree bring forth, before the day paſs as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you*,&c. *Seek ye the* LORD, *all ye meek of the earth, ſeek righteouſneſs, ſeek meekneſs, it may be ye ſhall be hid in the day of the* LORD's *anger.* And in this ſenſe, this is the moſt ſeaſonable word that I could have offered you in ſuch a day as this is, when God is gone forth to contend with the Nations; we hear of much ſickneſs and death both in City and Country; God is ſhaking his Rod, now therefore it is time early to ſeek the Lord: It is a hard matter for a man that is ſecure, to be awakened though the rod be coming upon

upon him, though the Lion roar, though judgments are breaking in upon us; as long as we can tell what ſhift to make, (with the Prodigal Son) we never think of returning to our Fathers Houſe, we never think of ſeeking unto God. 2 *Sam.* 14. 29, 30, 31, 32, When *Abſalom* ſet *Joabs* Corn on fire, he then made haſte to come to him. And thus it is with us, we will not ſeek after God; but if he ſet our Houſes on fire, our bodies with burning Fevers; when he comes, and conſumes, and ſcorches our comforts, then it may be we make haſte, and ſeek after him. In *Iſa.* 26. 16, *LORD*, (ſays the Prophet) *in trouble have they viſited thee: they poured out a prayer, when thy chaſtening was upon them.* And ſo in *Hoſ.* 5. 15, *In their affliction*

they will ſeek me early, ſays the Lord by the Prophet. *When they ſaw their ſickneſs, and their wound, they ſought other means:* when none would do, and their caſe was deſperate, they will then plead guilty, acknowledg their offence, and ſeek my face. *In their affliction they will ſeek me early.* And ſo likewiſe in *Pſal.* 78. 34, *When he ſlew them, then they ſought him, and they returned, and enquired early after God*; Here were a people (methinks) much of the ſpirit of the people of *England*; when he ſlew them, then they ſought him, and they returned, and enquired early after God; early, that is in reſpect of themſelves, though too late in reſpect of others that were already conſumed and deſtroyed; early, that is, before they themſelves

ſelvs were deſtroyed: though it was not early abſolutely, yet comparatively ſo; though it was late, yet the Lord accounts it for an early ſeeking.

But 2*dly*, To enquire and ſeek early after God, may have reſpect to the morning of every day of our lives, and then the duty lies thus upon us, *They that ſeek me early ſhall find me*; that is, if we ſeek God in the morning, we ſhall find him all the day long with us. *Early in the morning* (ſays *David*) *will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.* And in another place (ſays he) *I prevented the dawning of the morning.* And if we would learn this leſſon this day, and conſtantly practice it, we ſhall find greater advantages thereby, than we are aware of. The Poets

ſay, That *Aurora Muſis amica*, the morning is a friend to the Muſes; and doubtleſs the Saints of God will find the morning as much a friend to their Graces, as the Poets did to the Muſes. *When I awake*, ſays *David*, Pſal. 139. 18, *I am ſtill with thee*; when I awake, I ſeaſon my ſelf with the thoughts of God.

3. In the 3*d* place, and that which doubtleſs is moſt properly to be underſtood, and is eſpecially intended here is, as it hath reſpect to the day of our lives, and the morning-part of that day. Now then, you that are young, awake betimes, improve your morning, make uſe of it before it paſs away; conſider ſeriouſly your follies and neglects, what they have been, and be aſhamed: It is well for you

you that you are in the morning of your day; look out therefore early after Jeſus Chriſt, ſtudy to know God betimes, ſtudy to know Jeſus Chriſt while you be young. In *Matt.* 6. 33, The Lord Jeſus exhorts to *ſeek firſt the Kingdom of God, and his righteouſneſs*; and doubtleſs he there intends this, namely, ſeeking after God and his Kingdom in youth; do not firſt ſeek your pleaſures, do not firſt ſeek to fulfill your luſts and vain delights, and think it will be time enough to ſeek the Kingdom of God afterwards: No, you ought to ſeek that in the firſt place, before, and above all other things whatſoever. It is a Maxime of Hell, *Quærenda pecunia primum, virtus poſt nummos*, (but the Sons and Daughters of men are too apt to

take

take it up; yea, it is their rule they walk by) firſt to get an eſtate, and to grow rich, and when they have done that, then (if they can find leiſure) to ſerve God, and to ſeek after Chriſt. But I ſay, that it is good to begin betimes, and ſo did this *ſervant of God* that is gone to Heaven before us; ſhe began betimes to ſeek after Chriſt, and hath left upon record her early enquiries after the ways of God, after the knowledg of Chriſt: And oh what an honour is it to be like *Obadiah*? who ſays of himſelf, 1 *Kings* 18. 12, *That he feared the Lord from his youth.* Children, hear me, poſſibly I may never ſpeak to you more; Do you, as *Obadiah* did, fear the Lord from your youth. Do as *Timothy* did, in your childhood; hear this Children,

dren, your ſouls are precious and immortal, 2 *Tim.* 3. 15, It is here ſaid of him, that from a Child, he had known the Holy Scriptures, which were able to make him wiſe to ſalvation: Oh let it be truly ſo ſaid of you.

Uſe 1. Of *Information.* The folly and inadvertency of the moſt of the Sons and Daughters of men, who ſeek the world, ſerve their luſts, purſue lying vanities, and forget God, and ſeek him not. Oh what cauſe have we to complain of Children, of Parents, and Maſters of Families, how little care there is among any of an early ſeeking after Chriſt? Parents (generally) teach their Children to ſeek pride, to ſeek the luſts and pleaſures of this world, and their carnal delights:

lights: But who is there that goes forth early to ſeek the Lord?

We can riſe early for the world, go from Mountain to Hill to ſeek after the Profits thereof. *Iſa.* 5. 11, The Drunkard will riſe early that he may follow ſtrong drink; the Thief watches the twilight, but none ſeek the Lord.

Uſe 2. *Exhort.* To thoſe that have ſought the Lord while they were young, and do yet continue to ſeek him, I have a word or two to you.

1. The firſt is, to adviſe you to admire (exceedingly to admire) the goodneſs of God to you, in that he ever gave you hearts to ſeek him: Oh wonderful grace, that you that were born at the ſame time with others, have ſate under the

the ſame means with them that never yet have lookt towards Heaven, and their ſouls are now perhaps dropt into Hell. Oh (I ſay) admire, exceedingly admire, that God gave you, and not them, an heart to ſeek after him, to mind Chriſt, and Heaven, and the great concern of your ſouls; and ſurely you cannot but admire it, if you conſider how little of man there was in it, and how much of man there was againſt it. When did ever a ſtraying Sheep ſeek the Shepherd? When ever did the wild-Goats look after one to lead them? If Jeſus Chriſt had not found you firſt, you would never have ſought after him; if he had not found you, you would, or could never have found him; if he had not took hold of your hearts, it had been

been impoſſible for you to lay hold on him: It is utterly impoſſible for any man in his natural eſtate and condition, to ſeek after Jeſus Chriſt; this is a work that never will or can be done, unleſs God give a new heart, and a new ſpirit; there wants ſomething within to promote and effect this work, which God only can, and muſt give.

2. You that have ſo done, you that have ſought the Lord early, I would adviſe you to go on, and to perſiſt in ſeeking Chriſt; and as you go on, forget not what ſweet experiences you have had of the love and kindneſs of Jeſus Chriſt, what diſcoveries of light and grace, what comforts and revivings, what refreſhing joys and delights you have met with in your ſeeking of him; theſe things ought not to be for-

forgotten by you. And here I ſhall ſet before you the worthy example of a Knight of 80 years of age, who two or three days before he dyed, ſet a-part a day on purpoſe to call to mind the former experiences he had of God, and of what kind, and how God had dealt with him in his waiting upon him in his Ordinances from time to time. And I am informed that this *dear ſervant* of God that is now gone, hath left behind her a Diary written with her own hand, what experiences ſhe had of God in her waiting upon him in his Ordinances; and how, and what God had ſpoken to her, and by what Miniſters. And theſe examples are worthy both of your ſerious conſideration, and alſo excellent patterns for your imitation. But

3. You

3. You that have ſo done, you that have ſought God and Chriſt early, I would adviſe you to go on in ſeeking the Lord till you have found him in his glory: As you have in your ſeeking, found him in a way of grace here; ſo go on (I ſay) till you have found him in his glory hereafter, what darkneſs and difficulties ſoever lye in the way of your waiting upon him in his Ordinances and appointments; that you may be like the Church of *Thyatira*, and that it may be truly ſaid of you, as it is ſaid of that Church, *Rev.* 2. 19, *I know thy works, and charity, and ſervice, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works, and thy laſt to be more than the firſt.* This Teſtimony Chriſt himſelf gives concerning this Church. The nearer you come to Chriſt,

Chriſt, and to enjoyment of him in glory, the more haſte you ſhould make; every thing in nature does ſo; a Stone, the nearer it comes to the center, the ſwifter is its motion: And the Sun ſeems to move ſwifteſt, when it is near ſetting: Trees of Gods planting, bring forth more fruit in old age. *Pſal.* 92. 13, 14, *Thoſe that are planted in the houſe of the Lord, ſhall flouriſh in the Courts of our God. They ſhall ſtill bring forth fruit in old age: they ſhall be fat and flouriſhing.* See *Iſa.* 49. 29, 30, 31.

2. I have a word of advice to them (if there be any ſuch here) that are full of days, and it may be full of the world; but empty, very empty, of the knowledg of God, and have had little, or it may be no acquaintaince at all

with Jeſus Chriſt, nor did ever look after any. We may perhaps ſay, as *Job* ſaid, *Job* 12. 12, 13, *With the ancient is wiſdom; and in length of days, underſtanding. With him is wiſdom and ſtrength, he hath counſel and underſtanding.* But is it always ſo? Is there wiſdom and underſtanding always among the aged? Be there not among them ſuch, as are like *Ephraim?* of whom it is ſaid, *Hoſ.* 7. 9, 10, *Gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth it not. And the pride of Iſrael teſtifieth to his face, and they do not return to the Lord their God, nor ſeek him for all this.* They do not conſider the grave, whither they are going. Be there not careleſs men and women among us, that do not yet look out after Chriſt? that do not pro-

provide for the welfare of their ſouls, but are *cumbred about many things*, as *Martha* was? Yea, many aged men and aged women, who have lived all their days pudling in, and about the world, and worldly concerns, and have hitherto neglected *the one thing neceſſary, viz.* ſeeking after Chriſt, and the knowledg of him, and to get an intereſt in him. Do you not yet know, that you are going to appear before the Judgment-ſeat of Chriſt? And will you not yet come off from this world, but the longer you live, you will love the world ſo much the better? Is it not high time, that ſomething of the concernments of another world ſhould interpoſe between your life and your death? I ſhall offer you only two or three conſiderations in reference to this,

1. And firſt, I would beſeech you, and perſwade you, as I would be perſwaded my ſelf, That ſeeing you have hitherto neglected your ſouls, your precious and immortal ſouls, your ſpiritual (which are your greateſt) concernments till now you are grown old, I would perſwade you, yea, even beſeech you to conſider, that now you have but a little time left to do your greateſt work; you have now but one hour. In *Matt.* 20. 6, it is ſaid, that *Chriſt went out about the eleventh hour*, (when there was but one hour more to night) *to hire labourers into his vineyard*. So it is with you, it is the eleventh hour, your laſt hour. Beſides, have you no eyes, no ears, to ſee, and hear, that many dye dayly and weekly? how many goodly plants,

(that

(that God had planted in his own houſe) have of late been plucked up by the roots, and laid in their Graves? yea, every day the death of young and old do ring a peal in our ears, to awaken us to conſider what is to come; And will not Conſcience it ſelf (think you) ring a dreadful peal in our ears, when we come to dye, for that neither a voice from the Grave, nor yet a voice from the Temple, have yet prevailed with us to ſeek, and ſecure to our ſelves an intereſt in God and in Chriſt? Younger perſons than our ſelves are often taken away, and may we not thereby ſee and read that death it ſelf is coming to teach us all to be prepared and in readineſs for this our great change? Death lies (as it were) in Ambuſcado for us, and ſome-

times men are taken away by it in the field, and ſometimes at home, ſometimes by this, and ſometimes by that diſeaſe; but death comes to old age, *aperto marte*, in the plain and open field (as it were); and old men and old women cannot imagine that death is many days march from them; and therefore they (of all perſons) had need to ſeek after God, and an intereſt in Chriſt night and day; ſeek after this in your Houſes, in your Cloſets, in your Beds, in his Ordinances; yea, where-ever he is to be found, and not to give over ſeeking, till (with the Spouſe before mentioned) you have found him.

2. Conſider how Chriſt calls on you in the Text. Read the beginning of the Chapter, *Doth not wiſdom cry? and underſtanding put forth*

forth her voice? verſ. 1. From whence? *She ſtandeth in the top of high places, by the way in the places of the paths,* verſ. 2. *She cryeth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors,* verſ. 3. To whom doth ſhe cry? *Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the ſons of men,* verſ. 4. What doth ſhe call to them for? That they would come and ſeek wiſdom of Chriſt, that they would come and get underſtanding of him, that they would come and get knowledg of him, which is wiſdom indeed; *The fear of the Lord, that is wiſdom indeed.* Doth Chriſt thus call, and will you not regard, nor anſwer this call? What then will be his next call? For ought I know it may be this, Ariſe from the dead, and come

to judgment. Consider this.

3. And Lastly, Consider your grand inducement and incouragement, *They that seek me early, shall find me:* They that will yet seek him, that is your early, and God accounts it so. In *Psal.*78.34, *When he slew them, then they sought him, and they returned, and enquired early after God.* While grace is proclaimed, while God says, *They that seek me early, shall find me*; This (I say) is your early, and that which God himself accounts so; and will God yet be found of you, if you seek him? Oh! what cause have you to bless God, that ever he made such a promise as this, which is, *Tabula post naufragium.* And that in *Isa.* 55. 6, 7, *Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he*

he is near. Oh wonderful grace! that ſuch promiſes ſhould be publiſhed to you and me! *I love them that love me; and thoſe that ſeek me early ſhall find me.*

And now I ſhall no longer be burdenſom to you, but ſhall beg of you Children, for whom I have provided a few words, a ſhort Sermon, To hearken to your own Sermon, *&c.*

Thirdly, A word of *Exhortation*, or, *a ſhort Sermon to young ones*: Children ſeek the Lord *early*, whiles you are yet tender and young. The *Children* of their *dear deceaſed Mother*, ſhould hear her always ſaying what the Lord ſaid to her, *They that ſeek me early, ſhall find me.* O little Children! you lye much upon my heart, *Remember your Creator in the days of your*

your youth, and ſeek him betimes, *Eccleſ.* 12. 1.

1. Conſider you muſt dye, *It is appointed to all men once to dye*, *Heb.* 9. 27. And you may dye whiles you are Children. How many pretty little ones are every day taken away before your eyes? And if you be ſnatcht away by the cold hand of death, before you know God, and have found Chriſt, what will become of your precious and immortal ſouls? Would you be willing to dye, and be *damn'd?* Would you leave this world, and be content to be turn'd into *Hell*, and be puniſhed with the *Devil* and his *Angels*? Can you think of loſing your Friends, and your God too for ever?

2. Conſider what was the great errand upon which God ſent you into

into the world? Not to gratifie your *Luſts*, nor to purſue *lying vanities*; but *to know God, and Jeſus Chriſt*. And will you, dare you neglect your ſpecial work? O! whiles you are in your prime, mind what you have to do for your ſouls. Can you think it reaſonable, that the Devil ſhould have your youth, the flower and ſtrength of your days, and God be ſerv'd only with a crazy body, or the rottenneſs of old Age?

O, then, delay no longer, but ſeek the Lord. And.

1. Do it ſpeedily, the *Manna-gatherers* muſt go forth betimes, *Exod.* 16. 21, ſo muſt the *Chriſt-ſeekers*, before the Sun be up, before the heat of youthful luſts, or earthly cares, hinder your diligent ſeeking.

2. Do

2. Do it in earneſt, with all your hearts: *Pſal.* 119. 2, *Bleſſed are they that keep his teſtimonies, that ſeek him with their whole heart.*

3. Reſolve to ſeek the Lord till you find him in glory; not only while your Father, Mother, or Friends live, but as long as you live. It was a ſad ſtory in *Gen.* 35. 19, That *Rachel dyed, when ſhe was but a little way from Ephrath:* But more ſad, *Luk.* 13. 24, When *many ſhall ſeek to enter into Heaven, and not be able.*

2. Conſider, That if you ſeek him early, you ſhall be ſure to find him; I would beſpeak you, as *David* did his young *Solomon*, 1 *Chron.* 28. 9, *And thou Solomon, my ſon, know thou the God of thy Father, and ſerve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind:*

for

for the Lord ſearcheth all hearts, and underſtandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou ſeek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forſake him, he will caſt thee off for ever. It was a very ſerious ſpeech of *Azariah* to *Aſa*, and to all *Judah* and *Benjamin*, 2 *Chron.* 15. 2, *The Lord is with you, while you be with him; and if you ſeek him, he will be found of you: but if you forſake him, he will forſake you.*

Queſt. *But what ſhall we do to ſeek him?*

Anſ. If you will ſeek, you muſt forſake ſin, and *flee youthful luſts*, 2 *Tim.* 2. 22.

1. Eſpecially take heed of lying, that's the Devils chain, by which he holds poor Children from Chriſt; Lies are the refuge of guilt and folly,

folly, where the inconſiderate youth hides himſelf from man, and is kept from God; as *Adam*, when he knew he was naked, *Gen.* 3. 7, ſewed Fig-leaves together; a poor ſhift to hide his nakedneſs! ſo the ſons of *Adam*, when they become guilty, make Lies their covert; and inſtead of ſeeking, fly further from God, and bring a double guilt and puniſhment upon their heads.

2. Beware of Pride; the wanton youth is like the wild Aſſes Colt, or as *Jer.* 2. 23, 24, *The ſwift Dromedary traverſing her ways, or a wild Aſs uſed to the wilderneſs, that ſnuffeth up the wind at her pleaſure.* The ſouls not ſeeking God, is charged upon his Pride, *Pſal.* 10. 4, *The wicked through the pride of his countenance* (his looks teſtifie his

his pride) *will not ſeek after God, God is not in all his thoughts.*

3. Be not of a ſtubborn or diſobedient ſpirit to the counſels of Parents and Teachers; but hearken to their inſtruction. It is the moſt ſad and certain preſage of the ruine of your ſouls, if you refuſe the ſerious and early advice of your natural and ſpiritual Fathers. That's a dreadful ſaying, 1 *Sam.* 2. 25, concerning *Eli*'s Sons, *They hearkened not unto the voice of their Father, becauſe the Lord would ſlay them.*

2. Go read the Scriptures; the Eunuch found Chriſt there, and *Auguſtine* found him there while he was reading *Rom.* 13. 13. Go, ask your Teachers, and they will direct you in the way; go hence into your corners, and weep, and

pray,

pray, and God will come to you; and when you hear the word Preacht, mind what is ſpoken to you; it is God that ſpeaketh, whom you ſhould ſeek.

4. Conſider, If you will ſeek the Lord early, you will lay the foundation of your own peace and comfort, living and dying; O how may you prevent the ſighs, the groans, the repentings, the heart-akings that have fill'd up our days, for want of an early ſeeking after God: What a comfort was this to our dying Friend, as alſo to her ſurviving Friends and Relations, That *She did, and could truly ſay, that ſhe began to know God betimes, and her great preparation-work for death* (to uſe her own words) *was not now to do:* And as that was your comfort then, ſo let it be your Copy now.

What

What a great advantage was that to *David*, *Pſal.* 71. 17, 18, That when he was old, he could plead an old acquaintance with God? *O Lord, thou haſt taught me from my youth.* Now alſo *when I am old, and gray-headed (O God) forſake me not.*

Two things more I would briefly ſhew you.

1. What will be the difference between them that made it their buſineſs early to ſeek the Lord, and them that ſought him not, or ſought him too late; and that with reference to eternity, in a dying hour?

2. Whence that difference doth ariſe?

1. What will be the difference betwixt Saints and Sinners, with reſpect to death at laſt?

1. The wicked and ungodly

ſinner, that would ſeek the world, his own pleaſure and ſinful luſts; When he comes to dye, Conſcience rings a dreadful peal, and makes him cry out in the bitterneſs of his ſoul, Alas! Friend, I muſt dye, *Animula, vagula, blandula, quos nunc ad ibis locos?* Poor flitting, dear departing ſoul, whither art thou going? Chriſt is an enemy, God is a ſtranger, I have no friend to ſave me, I muſt be damn'd, I am undone, I am undone for ever.

But the dying Saint, when he hath the ſentence of death in him, hath the hopes of life before him; I muſt dye (ſays he) O welcom Death, *I am now going to enjoy him whom I have loved; to poſſeſs him whom I have ſought* (as this precious Saint ſaid to me a little before her death, *I know whom I have truſted*) *I am*

my

my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine, ſays the Believer, Now ſhall I ever be with the Lord.

2. The careleſs ſinner that would not ſeek the Lord, when he comes to dye, bids a doleful adieu to all his comforts; farwel Friends, Relations, pleaſures and delights, for ever, I ſhall never ſee a good day more.

But he that ſought the Lord while he liv'd, when he comes to dye, ſays, Behold, I dye, now farwel troubles, temptations, ſin, and ſorrow for ever; I am lanching forth into a glorious eternity, I ſhall never ſee a ſad day more.

3. The wilful ſinner, when he is about to dye, (after all the counſels he hath ſlighted, and now time ſhall be no more) cries out with horrour, I have for ever loſt my

opportunities of ſeeking God, it is now too late, I am left to perpetual howlings.

But the gracious Soul, who hath ſought, and found God in ſeeking, when he is about to dye, looks back with delight upon all the Ordinances, wherein he hath many times met with Chriſt, and found God nigh to his ſoul, and ſays, I am going where I ſhall need Ordinances no more, but God ſhall be all in all; I am going to mine eternal reſt, to an everlaſting Sabbath-keeping in Heaven.

2. Whence doth that difference ariſe? From the wiſdom of the one, and fooliſh inadvertency, or rather obſtinacy of the other; one knew his ſeaſon, and did the things that did belong to his peace; the other had his ſeaſon, but knew it not,

not, and now his miſery is great upon him; one ſought after Chriſt, that he might have an intereſt in him, and make God his friend; the other refuſed Chriſt, and now God is his enemy, and ſo death is to him *the King of terrors*: But the believing ſoul can (to allude to that in *Iſa.* 11. 8,) *play upon the hole of the Aſp, and put his hand on the Cockatrice Den*; and when the pains of an irkſom diſeaſe are upon him, and pangs of death before him, he ſays, all theſe rackings and grievous aches, be but like the ratling of the Charriot-wheels that *Joſeph* ſent to fetch his Father and his Brethren to him; and all his weariſom waking nights, be to him as the valley of *Achor*, or door of Hope.

1. Becauſe he knows death is no death to him, but a paſſage unto a glo-

glorious life with God, whom he hath ſought and ſerv'd all his days; he is but going unto his Beloved, the Lord Jeſus, who is gone that way before him.

2. Becauſe he looks on the Grave not as his Priſon, but a bed of Spices; or rather the Saints Tyring-Room, where they throw off mortality, to put on immortality; and lay aſide corruption, to put on incorruption.

I thought here to have ſpoken a word to the neareſt Friends and Relations of this deceaſed Saint, to let them ſee how little cauſe they have to mourn and to afflict their ſouls; but the Lord, who knows how to ſpeak comfort infinitely better, hath been with their hearts. Only let not the Husband grieve,

and

and ſay, Ah! what a dear Wife have I loſt! nor the Children ſay, what a dear Mother have we loſt! But rather,

1. Conſider, What ſhe hath found; She hath found that, which ſhe hath been ſeeking all her days; ſhe hath found that God, that Chriſt, that Heaven, that Boſom, and thoſe embraces that ſhe waited and long'd for.

3. Conſider, You will never be happy till you be where ſhe is gone before you.

3. Conſider, It is but a very little while and you ſhall ſee her again; as *Auguſtine* comforted his *Italica* concerning her dead Huſband; and let you, and I, and all of us mind our work, and be upon our march towards Heaven, taking our encouragement from the

Text

Text, where the Lords makes a proclamation of Grace, *I love them that love me; and thoſe that ſeek me early, ſhall find me.*

FINIS.

POSTCRIPT.

NOW though the Husband of our *Deceaſed Friend* has been ſomewhat averſe from publiſhing any thing of her own; yet being at laſt prevail'd upon, I ſhall commend to the *Reader* ſome particular *Experiences* of the Lords *early* dealing with her ſoul, as I have found them written by her own hand.

Firſt, I find this Poſition laid down by her in her own Book, *viz. That very many Scriptures do imply a poſſibility, that a believer may know that he is elected of God, and that his election is of free grace through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt unto holineſs, which ſhall end in glory*, Phil. 2.12,

13. 2 Cor. 13.5. 2 Pet. 1.10. *with very many more, which I ſhall forbear to mention.*

On which ground ſhe proceeds to take a particular account of her own ſpiritual eſtate, as follows.

IT hath been much upon my thoughts to write ſome of thoſe *Scriptural Experiences* which I have found and received great comfort in from the Word of God; being, as I judg, brought home to my ſoul, by the Spirit: And being now paſt the Fortieth year of my age, not knowing how ſoon the Lord may call, having always had a deſire to be on my watch, that I may be found ready and willing when ever my Lords time is (This

Mercy

Mercy I have been begging many years).

I can truly ſay, for ſome Months paſt I have had no reſt in my ſpirit till I began to write theſe things; and after faſting and prayer by my ſelf, while in doubt what to do, fearing the falſneſs of my own heart, I was encouraged by a Sermon that I heard on theſe words in *Pſal.* 77. 11, *I will remember the works of the Lord; ſurely I will remember thy wonders of old.* Where was much preſſed the duty of Chriſtians, To relate what God had done for them.

And out of the longing deſire I have for the good of you my *dear Little ones*, that you may value the precious Word of God wherein your *Mother* hath found ſo much comfort; you two, that

is, *SA.* and *MA.* are the only remnant that God hath ſpared (and bleſſed be God that hath left us as to this day a Berry or two): You are the children of many prayers; the Lord grant you may be bleſſed with all ſpiritual bleſſings in Chriſt Jeſus; and make you ſerviceable while you live, and fit you for an inheritance among the Saints in light. In order to that, I beg you in the name and fear of God, that you highly prize the Word of God, and every Ordinance of Jeſus Chriſt appointed in his Word: I would ſay with *David*, *Come my Children, hearken unto me, and I will tell you what he hath done for my ſoul*, Pſal. 34. 11. Pſal. 66. 16. I have found the Word read and preached, yea many a Scripture that I could not remember

member I read or heard preached on; yet it hath pleaſed my gracious God to ſend many a word to relieve and comfort my ſoul: his word hath been to me a convincing word, a reproving, an inſtructing, and a very comforting word, and that my ſoul knoweth by great experience.

I intend, if the Lord permit, and will ſend his Spirit to bring things to my remembrance (without that I can do nothing) to ſet down the kindneſs of the Lord from my Childhood, that was pleaſed to begin with me be-times. *O the depth of the riches both of the wiſdom and knowledg of God*, &c. Rom. 11.33,34,35,36.

I can remember, while a Girl at ſchool, about the age of nine or ten, I took great delight in read-

ing the ſtories in the Scripture, which did much affect me. Afterward I was more taken with the *New Teſtament*, that did reveal more of Chriſt to me. Then I began to pray as I was able. I do not remember, that I ever did make uſe of any written or printed form.

The firſt ſin that I remember troubled me, was telling my Father a lye; and it had this aggravation with it, that he told me, If I would tell him how it was, he would believe me rather than my Brothers and Siſters; and out of fear of them, I ſaid as they did; but with a very trembling heart, which much troubled me ſome years after this, when I begun to hearken to the word Preached, where I heard that ſin ſet out.

I was much affected, and mourned much under the ſenſe of ſin; ſeeing a burden in it, I deſired to look after a remedy.

The firſt Miniſter that I remember, I hearkned to, was Mr. *H.* of *Kenſington*, where my Father was, in the ſummer. I did then begin to underſtand my ſtate by nature, how under the wrath and curſe of God. Then I began to ſee my need of, and did deſire after Jeſus Chriſt, being, as I thought then, willing to take him on his own terms. Jeſus Chriſt was then, as I thought, precious to me; and being willing to underſtand my own caſe and condition, it pleaſed the Lord to open my heart, to hearken diligently to the word Preached, wherein I found much comfort, which ingaged my heart

unto the Lord, and made me unwilling to neglect any duty which he commanded, or to commit any ſin which the Lord forbids. This I well remember to be the frame of my ſpirit near thirty years ago.

Hearing much, that it was the end of life to glorfie God, it made the earneſt breathings of my ſoul to be this; Oh, but how ſhall I glorifie God!

After this, by a Providence I heard Mr. *M.* at *Weſtminſter*, my Father being there for ſome months; he was on that Scripture, 2 *Chron.* 15. 17. *Neverthelefs the heart of Aſa was perfect all his days.* I took great delight to hear him, being often angry he had done ſo ſoon. My ſoul was much refreſhed by the ſigns and marks he gave of a perfect heart.

I did uſually go from hearing, into my Chamber, and beg earneſtly of God for a perfect heart, in which as I thought, I ſaw more of value, than in any injoyments whatever; it was what did concern my ſpiritual eſtate.

I begun to be much troubled about, how ſuch a poor ſinful creature that was by natnre under the wrath and curſe of God, ſhould eſcape this. I did believe as I had been taught, it was by a Redeemer; I did alſo believe that there was no name given under Heaven, by which I muſt be ſaved, but the Lord Chriſt Jeſus. I did alſo much hearken to the tenders of Chriſt in the Goſpel, and how he invited ſinners to himſelf, and that he offered himſelf freely: this gave me encouragement. But as I had read and heard it was a

ſtrait

ſtrait gate, and a narrow way, few that find it: this made me very careful, leſt I ſhould be deceived.

And here came in the great queſtion, But how ſhall I know that God in Chriſt will accept me? *For many are called, but few choſen*; God hath mercy on whom he will, and *it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that ſheweth mercy.* This made me very diligent to hearken to marks and ſigns of grace.

The firſt that I remember troubled me, was this; underſtanding it was the common lot of all Gods People, *through many afflictions to enter into heaven:* This did much trouble me at that time, and I was apt to think I ſhould be able to bear any thing that God would lay on me, ſo it might evidence

to

to me the love of God to my ſoul: but fool that I was! I judged too ſoon; for when it pleaſed the All-wiſe God to try me, I quickly ſaw that my ſtrength was but ſmall, by my fainting ſo much as I did in a day of adverſity, which by many ſad experiences I can ſhew, how unable to bear any thing when tryed. However then I thought I could bear any thing from with out, ſo all might be well within.

After this, by a Providence, I came to hear Mr. *V.* at St. *Olaves*; the firſt Sermon that I heard him, was on theſe words, *And all the things thou canſt deſire, are not to be compared unto her*, Prov. 3. 15. Wherein was ſet out the value of Jeſus Chriſt above all that the world afforded, which very much wrought on my heart, with great long-

longing after this Chriſt; but ſtill came this queſtion, *How ſhall you know your intereſt?* However, it pleaſed God ſo to bleſs his Miniſtry to me, that uſually I found my doubts ſo reſolved, and my heart ſo opened, that I went away with great joy and comfort; but for all this I was perplexed with dreadful thoughts; after I had ſuch peace and joy, then Satan begun to work indeed: *I, but is there ſuch a God, and ſuch a Chriſt to be believed in?* How to anſwer this temptation, I was at a great loſs, and would tell none what did ail me; I mourned much under it, and thought, I queſtioned whether there was a God or no; yet then I did not neglect praying, and did as it were pour out my ſoul daily unto God for victory, that he would not give me up

up to an unbelieving heart, and of his free-grace (who knew my ſoul in adverſity) by his word to ſend me relief.

Going to hear on a Lecture-day, he then Preached on theſe words, *Hoſ.* 2 7. *I will go and return to my firſt husband, for then was it better with me than now.* It pleaſed God ſo to order it, that he gave great caution againſt ſuch thoughts, ſaying, *Take heed, poor ſoul, when the Devil caſteth in ſuch thoughts: Is there a God, or a Chriſt? Take heed, for then Satan will have you in his ſnare.* This, with many other things was ſet home on my heart; then he did convince me, by appealing to the Saints experience, *Is it not better to entertain good thoughts of God, and of Chriſt? was it not better with you then, than now?* The

Lord

Lord gave me ſo to cloſe in with the truth of that word, that I had great joy and peace through believing, and went home full of comfort, that God had ſo met me with a word. By that means it pleaſed the Lord to give check to thoſe unbelieving thoughts that ſo overcame me.

And yet to this day, I have great cauſe to mourn, for that unbelief I find in my heart, notwithſtanding all the experiences that God hath given me; that Scripture doth often reprove me, *Heb.* 3. 12. *Take heed, leſt there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.*

After this I kept waiting at the poſts of Wiſdoms gate, that I might underſtand the ſtate of my ſoul, which was the one thing neceſſary that

that I desired to look after; and finding by the word Preached, that the usual way and method of God, was to strike the soul down, as he did them in the second of the *Acts*, and the Jaylor, and the like; this did raise in me great doubts what to think of my self, because I could not find in my self such convictions of, and humiliation for sin, as was pressed; and as to Original sin, it did not seem much to affect me; this did bring me into great fears: However, I took that way I had found comfort in, which was by prayer to the Lord, to bless his word to me. Mr. *V.* was then on this Text, *Ephes.* 2. 8. *By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of your selves, it is the gift of God.* To this I diligently hearken'd, and received great support, for all

my

my objections ſeemed to be anſwered; yet for all this I did as it were refuſe to be comforted: he being on ſigns of grace, cloſed the Text with theſe two marks: 1. *A ſouls going on in a way of duty, was a very hopeful ſign.* 2. *But the Spirit of God was the only infallible witneſs: the ſpirit it ſelf beareth witneſs with our ſpirit, that we are the Children of God.* The firſt did comfort me, the ſecond did very much trouble me; for I could not underſtand the meaning of the ſpirits witneſs, which fearing leſt I ſhould be deceived in a matter of ſo great a concern, made me give all diligence in reading and hearing, that my doubts might be reſolved; but as yet no reſt in my ſpirit: and the more increaſed, be-

being the time to go into the Country, where uſually our family was; this added much to my grief to be taken off from hearing Mr. *V.*

I began to look more into the Scriptures, and to pick up whatever did come ſuddenly into my mind; and it pleaſed God to caſt in many that ſeemed to comfort me, which I wrote down in that year.

But then came this queſtion, Theſe are marks and ſigns that belong to ſuch and ſuch Saints in Scripture: But what is this to thee? Theſe thoughts much caſt me down; what to do I knew not, but kept ſtill praying and waiting on God, and I found ſpeedy relief, when I leaſt thought of it. My Father being at *Hammerſmith*, I went

conſtantly to hear there, and that Summer ſeveral City-Miniſters did ſupply the place; and among the reſt, I heard Mr. *G.* on theſe words, *Lord, to whom ſhall we go? thou haſt the words of eternal life, Joh.6.68.* As I remember, this was his Obſervation, *That ſoul that had once given up it ſelf to, could never bear a going off from Jeſus Chriſt.* His arguing thus with a doubting ſoul; *Try thy ſelf; cannot you bear a leaving of God? then doubt not that he will leave you: would you know whether God loves you? conſider, do you love God? for you could not love him, unleſs he loved you firſt.* By theſe and ſeveral arguments, the Lord was pleaſed ſo to ſet it home on my heart; I may well forget the words, my heart being ſo full of peace and joy through believing, 1 *Pet.* 1.

that

that I cannot expreſs it, being as I judg, better felt than expreſt; it did ſeem at that time to me, as if I had taſted of that *joy unſpeakable and full of glory*. I know not what to make of it, except it were a *ſealing unto the day of redemption*. I thought then my joy being ſo great, I could willingly have gone out of the body, to have been with the Lord. I remember I went home and fell on my knees, admiring the freeneſs of grace to ſuch a worm as I; crying out with the Apoſtle, *O the depth!* The ſenſe of free-grace and rich mercy did much overcome me; the which, I hope, I ſhall admire to all eternity: O the goodneſs of God! when I had again and again refuſed to be comforted, yet he waited to be gracious to me! This I write and

ſpeak, that God the *Father*, and God the *Son*, and God the *Holy Ghoſt* may have the glory of their own work.

When under my doubts and fears, I ſeldom went to hear, but the word did ſeem to ſpeak unto me; and ſeveral Scriptures came ſuddenly to my mind, that did reprove, and quiet, and comfort me, ſuch as theſe, *Why art thou caſt down, O my ſoul? and why art thou diſquieted within me? hope in God, for I ſhall yet praiſe him.* This hath been made good unto me; and that in the *Pſalm*, *In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my ſoul*; and that *it is good for me to draw near to God*, Pſal. 73. 28. And that *a day in thy courts is better than a thouſand*, Pſal. 84. 10. And

I can truly ſay as *David* did, *I had rather be a door-keeper in the houſe of my God, than to dwell in tents of wickedneſs.* Experienced I have that of *Job*, *I have eſteemed thy word more than my neceſſary food*, *Job* 23.12. I have had great ſupport from that Scripture, *All that the Father giveth me, ſhall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out*, Joh.6.37. I have often thought of that Scripture with joy, *Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifeſt thy ſelf unto me, and not unto the world? for who maketh thee differ from another? and what haſt thou that thou didſt not receive?* I have again and again in theſe words, and many more, admired freeneſs of grace towards ſuch a poor doubting ſoul as I was; I doubt not, but he which hath begun, will finiſh his own

work on *Sarah Lye.* Amen, Amen.

Thus far I have written a relation of the firſt 20 years of my age, what was the great thing that moſt troubled me; it was, That I might have aſſurance of the love of God, and a well-grounded hope of an intereſt in Chriſt; that what the Lord Jeſus had done and ſuffered, might be applied unto me; and having hopes through grace, and rejoycing much in hopes of the glory of God, *which hope maketh not aſhamed.*

After this I began to have great tryals, as to the loſs of my relations; my Parents; that were very dear to me, both dying within four Months; this with many more troubles much caſt me down; yet to obſerve the Providences of God to me, and how by his word he ſent me relieving

lieving experiences, ſhould I ſet it down in order, would ſwell to a great Volume.

Only thus much I may ſpeak to the praiſe of God, that when Father and Mother forſook, God took me into his care, and hath graciouſly provided for me, and hath given me an *Agurs* portion, which I beg'd of the Lord when but a Girl: I can truly ſay, *All the ways of the Lord are, and have been to me mercy and truth:* For this God I have choſen to be my God, for ever and ever; and I doubt not, but he will be my guide even unto death.

And now, my dear Child, or Children, that ſhall read of this way and method that the Lord did uſe in bringing me off from all things to himſelf, take heed, pray, take heed you *do not limit the holy One*

of

of Iſrael ; nor tye up God to this, or any way of working; the Lord worketh all things after the counſel of his own will : but we are commanded to *ſearch our hearts, and try our ways, and to examine our ſelves, and to give all diligence to make our calling and election ſure.*

Look that the work of converſion be wrought, and leave time and way to the All-wiſe God, that governs the world, and orders all things, to whom be glory for ever and ever, *Amen*, and *Amen.*

All that I have written in theſe few ſheets, is not out of any book but that of my own *conſcience* ; no aſſiſter, but the *ſpirit* ; and to no end, but *that God in all things may have glory*, for I will not dare to ſpeak of any of thoſe things which Chriſt hath not wrought in me.

FINIS.

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